

State Superintendent's Student Advisory Board Spring 2014



2013 2014
Superintendent Denise Juneau

The Student Advisory Board is part of Graduation Matters Montana, an initiative to increase the number of Montana students who graduate from high school through collaborative partnerships with schools, community organizations, businesses and youth.



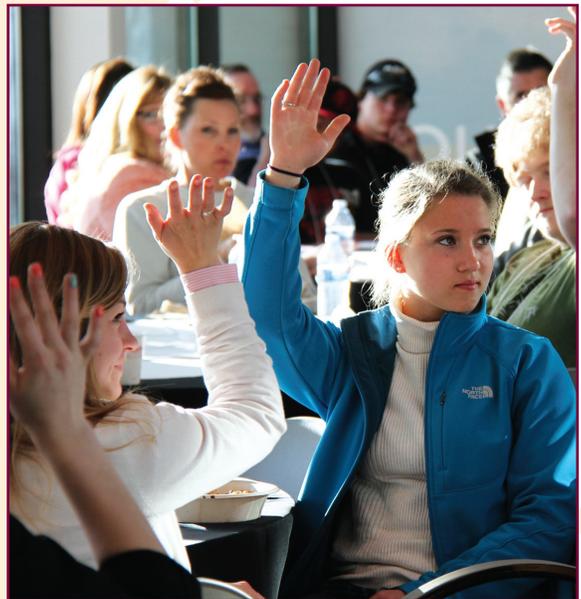
“The future of Montana rests in the hands of our students. I believe their strong voices and creative ideas will lead us successfully into the next century.”

State Superintendent Denise Juneau

Student Advisory Board Spring Summit 2014

Overview

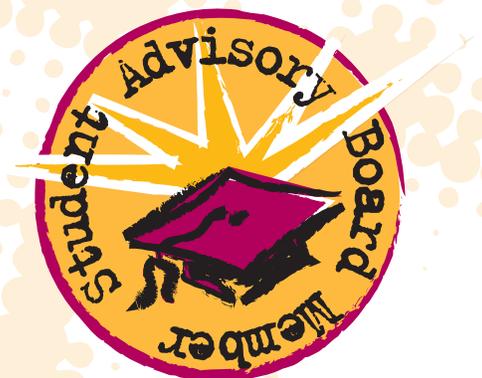
State Superintendent Denise Juneau’s 2013-2014 Student Advisory Board (SAB) assembled for the Spring Summit on April 24 & 25, 2014 in Billings at the Yellowstone Art Museum. The theme of the Summit was “Student Voice in Civic Life” and SAB members discussed with Superintendent Juneau ways that schools and communities encourage students to become engaged citizens. As Superintendent Juneau stated, “The more we listen to the voices of our students, the better off our schools and communities will be. We need to be engaging students in state, local and national decisions because their voices matter.”



The SAB is comprised of 40 high school students from 31 Montana schools. Members were nominated by local school staff and community members and completed an application process for selection to the board. Board members, in grades 9-12, travelled from rural communities such as Wibaux and Eureka and from larger communities like Great Falls and Billings. The SAB reflects the diverse backgrounds, interests and experiences of Montana students. The board consists of National Honor Society members, athletes, Native American leaders, ranchers, artists, members of musical bands, video gamers, valedictorians and students who dropped out and re-enrolled in high school.

“Student Voice in Civic Life” Theme

SAB members discussed how civic education is encouraged in Montana’s schools. They discussed the relevance of the issue, how their schools help them to become engaged citizens, and addressed what schools can do. They also talked about what students can do to encourage their communities to support more civic education in school and how to empower students’ voices through leadership development.



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My Voice Survey™ Data Evaluation

At the SAB meeting the members discussed the *My Voice Survey™* data. *My Voice™* is a survey that Montana schools voluntarily participate in to understand how students think and feel about their school. Educators utilize this tool to gain insight into what motivates and inspires students to be successful, and to evaluate how well their schools are serving students. The SAB used the survey results as a jumping off point into our deeper conversation on “Student Voice in Civic Life”. Below are the responses SAB had to the results of the *My Voice Survey™*.

SAB Reflection:

The SAB believed that more opportunities for students to connect with their teachers and community members would be very beneficial. The board members believed that Montana’s students don’t feel a strong connection with their school and community. They did acknowledge that many students are becoming more independent in high school, and that could be reflected in this survey result. They suggested one-on-one time with teachers, school counselors or an adult mentor would be a good way for students to develop stronger connections with their school and community. SAB also wanted businesses to show they value local schools and students by showing support for school activities and volunteering as a mentor.

SAB Reflection:

The board members shared personal experiences about how educators have engaged students to become thoughtful citizens. SAB students recommended that schools implement:

- Voter registration drives in schools
- Student government clubs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Reading local newspaper articles in class
- And “Citizen of the Week” project- Pick a person who represents an engaged citizen to highlight each week.



**MY
VOICE**
student voice

The 2012-2013 My Voice Survey™ showed that 79 percent of 6-12 graders believed they were encouraged to practice good citizenship at school.



Discussion with State Superintendent Denise Juneau:

At each SAB Summit, the Superintendent asked the board members to respond to a set of critical questions based on the theme of that Summit. This year she asked two questions.

- 1) What do you think will be the most pressing issues your generation will face in the next 10 years?

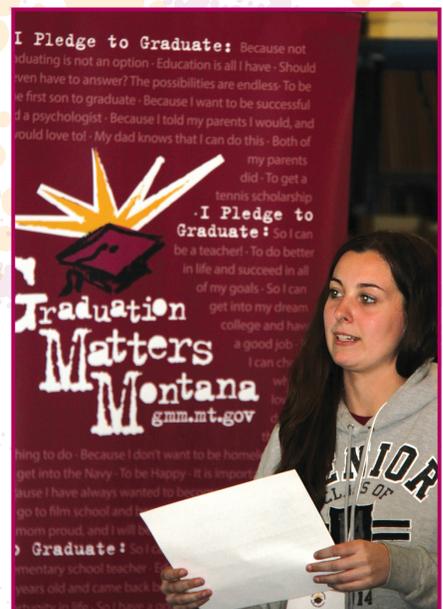


- 2) How can your school and community better equip you and your friends to be part of the solution?

SAB asked that schools expand a student's knowledge and understanding of the world. The SAB wanted to focus on learning more about life and social skills. They wanted to be educated on the problems that will face their generation by discussing them in the classroom. The board even suggested the need for a "Turning 18" class. A "Turning 18" class would help students prepare themselves for their future by giving them the knowledge and life skills they need to succeed in the world.

One Montana Presentation

The Executive Director of One Montana, Lisa Grace, and Skyview High School student, Michaela Christenson came to speak about the non-profit's Rural-Urban Exchange Project. The purposes of these exchanges are to: develop entrepreneurial spirit and skills amongst students and current business leaders; build rural-urban networks; develop skills for collaboration; and forge long lasting connections that can grow into future projects.



Taking Action!

At the Summit the SAB members had the opportunity to develop their leadership skills with a “Policy Institute” activity. The board members split into small groups and developed an idea to solve a problem. The issues they chose to solve were child hunger, college affordability and math mastery. The groups presented their creative solutions to different groups of stakeholders. The stakeholders were special guests, State Senator Robyn Driscoll (D), State Representative Donald Jones (R), Dan Carter with ExxonMobil, and Dr. Johnel Barcus with Sage Quest Consulting participated. The State Superintendent, Denise Juneau, and OPI Staffer Amy Kruse represented the Office of Public Instruction during the activity.

Board members were evaluated on how well they organized, envisioned and presented their ideas. Overall, the SAB members had a great time and each group of stakeholders were impressed with the confidence, excitement, and ideas that the members had.

After the activity was completed stakeholders presented feedback to the students. If you are interested in using this “Policy Institute” activity with your students contact, Jennifer Bezanson at jbezanson@mt.gov or 406-444-3526 for the information.

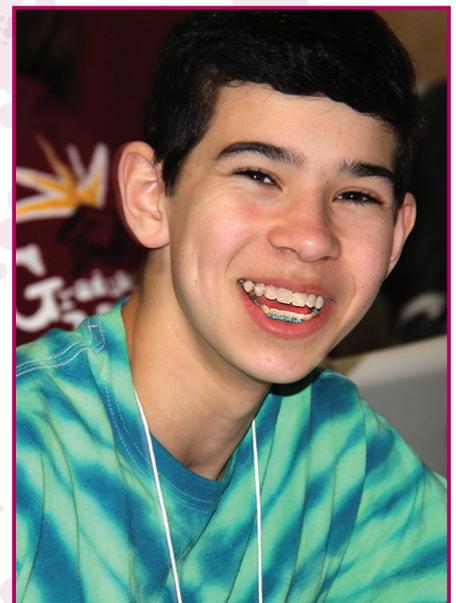
SAB Final Recommendations

- Students want a relevant and challenging education that connect their classroom with the world.
- Students want to develop a connection to their school and community.
- Students want leadership development activities that grow confidence and are fun.
- Students don't want to just be assigned tasks but want to learn the life and social skills that will be essential to their success in the future.



“Learning how to pitch an idea to different groups in different ways, gave me confidence”

Austin



State Superintendent's Student Advisory Board Members 2013-2014

Alexander Blackburn
Ashley Saunders
Austin Waldbillig
Beth Sutter
Caleb Dexter
Chloe Autio
Courtney Coburn
David Fugate
Jonathan Sherrod
Judi-Ann Doney
Kathryn Stein
Khyree Harper
Kylie Lutes
Layne Johnson
Leslie Red Dog Jr
LoRae Hartman
Marcus Richards
MariBeth Rider
Megan Gordon
Nicolas Wahl
Rafael Vega
Reed Lone Fight
Ryan Vicek
Saundra Chiefstick
Shaelynn Tellez
Sharidan Russell
Shelbi Fitzpatrick
Walt Zeimer
Zachary Felsman



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